



RTCA: National Park Service Community Assistance

Accepting Applications through August 1

Who We Are:

A program to share expertise of the National Park Service across America

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), works with community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribes or tribal governments, and local, state, and federal government agencies to achieve locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. Projects include natural area preservation, rivers conservation and development of recreational trails and greenways in urban, suburban and rural settings. RTCA carries out the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

A network of 90 community-based planning professionals delivers the RTCA Program nationwide, helping communities to help themselves achieve on-the-ground success. Through RTCA, the National Park Service offers conservation assistance to communities in every state--communities both near to and far from a national park.

We measure our success by our ability to help our local partners make their rivers, trails greenways and open spaces a vital, life-enhancing part of your landscape. With well under one percent of the National Park Service budget, RTCA each year helps create over 1,400 miles of trail, to protect more than 700 miles of waterways, and to preserve some 63,700 acres of open space.

What We Do:

Help move your ideas into action

RTCA works by invitation, and in a collaborative way, to assist your natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. While RTCA is not a grant program, we offer staff assistance in conceptual and master planning, organizational

development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement, and we tailor our assistance to our partners' needs.

Whether you are a group of committed citizens launching a new project, a team of local government agencies aiming for a multi-jurisdictional effort, or a public/private committee with a community vision, RTCA can help you catalyze your ideas into actions. Working side-by-side with grassroots groups and local governments in communities throughout the country, the National Park Service is building a nationwide network of parks, open spaces, rivers, and trails. We invite you to discover more about how RTCA can help your community achieve its own natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation goals.



Oakland Community Park Stewardship/Groundwork USA: Oakland, CA. City of Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown and community members participate in a park clean-up event. RTCA is helping to establish local Groundwork USA Trusts in Oakland and San Diego, California. Photo: Linda Stonier

Other National Park Service Assistance Programs

The National Park Service can also assist community-based conservation and recreation projects through the following programs:

- **Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP):** The CCSP is a 50:50 matching grant program to support National Park Service units and programs through partner support. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/ccsp/
- **Hydropower Recreation Assistance:** Provides technical assistance on recreation access and facilities, instream flows for recreation, and riparian corridor protection to all participants in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower licensing and relicensing proceedings. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/hydro/
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** Provides 50% matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Grants are administered through the states and are contingent on annual appropriation. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/lwcf/
- **Federal Lands to Parks:** Helps state and local agencies acquire, at no cost, surplus federal land and facilities for parks and recreation. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/flp/
- **Cultural Resources:** The NPS administers a number of very successful federal historic preservation funding programs. Information about grants, tax credits and other forms of assistance can be found by visiting www.cr.nps.gov/helpyou.htm

Project Highlights...

Building Networks to Connect People and Places

The mission of the National Park Service is, "to cooperate with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the country and the world."

In keeping with our NPS mission, we are focusing our RTCA work on "network" projects that create physical connections between people, the natural and outdoor recreation values in their communities, and between communities.

Our goal is to support local, regional, and statewide networks of parks, rivers, trails and greenways in every state. Network projects most often involve both public and private partners.

Promoting Physical Activity in Your Communities and National Parks

In support of the President's "Healthier US Initiative", we also encourage your proposals for projects that incorporate health and fitness goals, such as:

- Creating new trails and tools to promote active lifestyles by connecting community places like schools, parks, rivers and neighborhoods
- Development of regional and statewide partnerships of public health, transportation, and trail and conservation organizations to create and communicate active recreation opportunities in your local communities and in national parks
- New programs in national parks to encourage use of park trails and other facilities by visitors and nearby residents



Santiago Creek: Orange, CA. The Santiago Creek trail will ultimately link five local parks and provide an enhanced natural land extension from wildlife reserves in the Santa Ana Mountains downstream toward the Santa Ana River. RTCA helped the City of Orange initiate a planning process in 2001-2003. Photo: Jim Donovan.



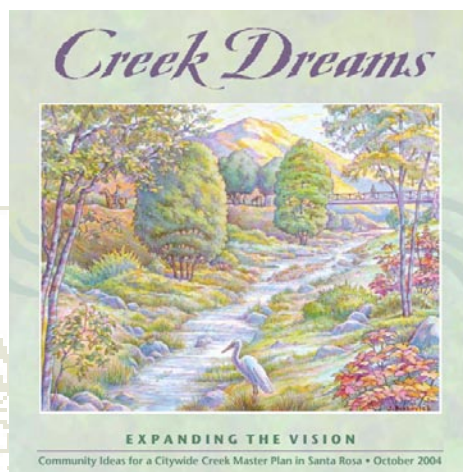
Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area (BRBNA): CA. This area is an interconnected network of conservation and recreation lands and working landscapes. RTCA is working with the BRBNA Conservation Partnership to develop a trails and recreation framework responsive to growing community interests. Photo: Andrew Fulks.



Spring Mountains Perimeter Trail: Near Las Vegas, NV. RTCA assists gateway communities to the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest with planning the Spring Mountains Perimeter Trail, a 150-mile backcountry trail surrounding the Spring Mountains, just west of Las Vegas, Nevada. Photo: Liz Smith-Incer.



Kalama Park Whale Trail: South Maui, HI. Volunteers install recycled glass groundcover below a whale sculpture on the Kalama Park Whale Trail. The trail will add a safe, close-to-home fitness route and link the park to South Maui's coastal trail and nearby businesses. RTCA aids with outreach, facilitation and site plans and helped launch the citizen team that leads the effort. Photo: Jerrie Sheppard.



Citywide Creek Master Plan: Santa Rosa, CA. This effort will support protection and enhancement of the city's 70-mile network of waterways. RTCA assisted with an extensive public outreach effort that resulted in "Creek Dreams: Expanding the Vision", which contains hundreds of community ideas for their creeks.



Baker Valley and Basin Trails: Baker, NV. Through the Nevada Field Office, RTCA is providing assistance to Great Basin National Park gateway communities in Nevada and Utah to develop a network of trails. Photo: Liz Smith-Incer.



San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail: CA. The San Francisco Bay is part of an interconnected regional open space system of natural, conservation, and recreation lands and waters. This water trail will promote recreational use of the bay by kayakers and other human powered boaters through the designation and development of a network of environmentally sensitive access points. RTCA is working with Bay Access and state and regional agencies to promote the vision. Photo: Paul Kamen.

Project List, Fiscal Year 2005

CALIFORNIA

- Ahwahnee Hills Regional Park
- Baxter Creek Greenway
- City of Redlands Emerald Necklace
- **Cooley Landing Nature Center**
- Garden to Garden - Los Angeles
- **Groundwork San Diego**
- Lower Dry Creek/Ueda Parkway Enhancements
- **Mission Valley Preserve Enhancement**
- **Northeast Los Angeles Open Space**
- Oakland Community Park Stewardship/ Groundwork Trust
- **Orange Coast River Park**
- **Sacramento River Delta Waterfront Trail**
- Salinas River Enhancement, Paso Robles
- **San Francisco Blue Greenway**
- San Lorenzo Creek Corridor
- Santa Rosa Citywide Creeks
- South Coast Missing Linkages
- **(Golden Gate) Trails Forever**
- **Tujunga Wash Revitalization**

HAWAII

- Kaua'i Wetlands Protection
- Kalama Park Whale Trail
- **Pu'u Mali Habitat Restoration**
- **Waihe'e Preserve**

NEVADA

- Baker Village and Basin Trails
- Beatty Habitat Trails
- Henderson Open Space Conservation
- Heritage Greenway Trail-West
- Vias de Vegas- Trail Connectivity

Projects appearing in **bold** are new for FY 05.

In addition to the projects above, RTCA has provided consultation-level assistance to over 20 additional efforts throughout California, Hawaii'i and Nevada.



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How to Apply for Assistance



Mosaic created by artist Didier Guedj with community members at Solano Canyon Community Garden in Los Angeles, California. RTCA is working with the Los Angeles Community Garden Council to enhance their ability to secure open space for community gardens throughout Los Angeles. Photo: Jim Donovan

Mission of the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the country and the world.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program works collaboratively, by invitation, with partners on a wide variety of conservation and recreation projects. These partners include nonprofit organizations, community groups, tribes or tribal governments, and local, state, or federal government agencies. RTCA provides a variety of assistance tailored to the partner's needs, but does not provide direct grants.

RTCA often acts as a catalyst to help assemble the necessary pieces to achieve on-the-ground conservation success. RTCA helps identify what types of aid a partner needs and either supplies or locates sources for the assistance. RTCA helps partners navigate the planning process, converting ideas into actions, and often provides assistance in conceptual and master planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement.

Application Guidelines

A project is a partnership effort between local, state, or national agency or organization partners and the RTCA Program with specific goals and outcomes that lead to tangible natural resource conservation and/or outdoor recreation results.

Projects are locally-requested and led and should include significant public involvement and outreach. Projects should also include the commitment, cooperation and cost-sharing of all partners. The RTCA involvement in these partnerships generally does not exceed two years in length and requires all partners to monitor progress and measure success during and after completion of the project.

We recommend that you contact our local program staff to discuss your interest and seek guidance before applying. Applications for RTCA assistance are

competitively evaluated based on how well the applications meet the following criteria:

1. Anticipated outcomes of the project are clear and lead to the accomplishment of the National Park Service mission and RTCA mission and strategic plan goals.
2. Project will protect important natural resources or enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Project has specific, partner-defined goals and an anticipated outcome leading to measurable natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation results within an appropriate timeframe.
4. Initial project partners are identified and a lead project partner is designated. The lead partner may be a federal agency, state or local agency, tribe, non-profit organization, or citizens' group. Federal agencies, including NPS areas, may be the lead partner only in collaboration with a nonfederal partner.

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5. There is a commitment by lead project partners to significant public involvement and outreach in the project.
6. Roles and contributions of initial project partners, including RTCA, are identified.
7. There is a commitment by initial project partners to cooperate and to provide or obtain the resources necessary to implement the project.
8. There is evidence of broad support for the project.

Preference is given to a Project that also:

- a. provides physical connections among resources;
- b. includes an NPS area as an actively involved project partner;
- c. includes both natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation.

Application letters (one to three pages) should include the following information:

1. Project Title and Description

- Provide the name of the project and project location.
- Note who is taking responsibility for the implementation of the project.
- Describe briefly what will be done, why the project is important, the proposed schedule, and who will be involved.
- Identify what populations in your community will be served by the project.
- Outline the background or prior activity on the project (if any) and the current status.

2. Resource Importance

- Describe the most important natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources within the project area.

3. Anticipated Results

- On-the-ground results: What specific resource will be created, conserved, enhanced or made available to the public? For instance: How many river miles will be improved by restoration projects? How many river miles will be conserved with enhanced protection status? How many miles of multi-use

trail will be created? How many acres of parkland will be created and where? How many acres of wildlife habitat will be restored?

- Other accomplishments: For example, an increased community commitment to stewardship, a new conservation organization, or the development of a concept plan for a trail.

4. Support for the Project

- Describe the support you anticipate from interested stakeholders, such as public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and landowners.
- List the project partners and describe their role(s) and contributions.

5. RTCA Program Role

- Describe what kind of technical assistance or role you are seeking from the RTCA program.

6. Contact Information

- Please provide information about the key project supporter(s), including name of leader, organization, address, phone, fax, and e-mail.

Support letters from elected officials, community leaders, and cooperating organizations are strongly recommended. The deadline for projects set to start the following fiscal year (which runs from October 1 to September 30) is August 1. Please return your completed application letter to the regional RTCA Program Leader. Contact information for all of our regional offices is available through the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/rtca> [also see box below].

Final project selection is generally completed in early November after passage of the federal budget. In the interim our staff will acknowledge receipt of your application. Unfortunately, limited staffing does not allow us to undertake all of the excellent projects that are proposed.

As public awareness of our program is key to our continued ability to staff projects, we request that cooperators will, whenever feasible and appropriate, give credit to RTCA on plans, publications, and other materials or project-related products that were prepared with RTCA support.



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